

Mark 3:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables,
How can Satan cast out Satan?

Analysis

Jesus 'called them unto him' for direct confrontation and teaching 'in parables'—brief illustrative stories conveying spiritual truth. His rhetorical question 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' exposes illogical accusation. The question assumes Satan's self-interest—he wouldn't undermine his kingdom. Jesus' parabolic method accomplishes dual purposes: revealing truth to receptive hearts while concealing from hardened hearts (Mark 4:11-12). His willingness to engage opponents demonstrates patient teaching despite hostility.

Historical Context

Rabbinic teaching regularly employed parables (Hebrew *mashal*, Greek *parabolē*). Jesus' parables differed in directness and authority—He didn't cite previous authorities but spoke with inherent authority. Parabolic teaching served apologetic purposes in controversial settings—forcing listeners to draw conclusions rather than rejecting direct claims. 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' employs *reductio ad absurdum*, demonstrating logical impossibility.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' patient engagement model gracious apologetics?
2. What role should logic and reason play in defending Christian truth?
3. How can you use questions to expose false reasoning while pointing toward truth?

Interlinear Text

καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν
And **he called** **them** **in** **parables** **unto him and said**
G2532 G4341 G846 G1722 G3850 G3004

αὐτοῖς Πῶς δύναται Σατανᾶν Σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλειν
them **How** **can** **Satan** **Satan** **cast out**
G846 G4459 G1410 G4567 G4567 G1544

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:34 (Parallel theme): All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: